



**Brumos Pre-911 Pt. 1**  
**Story/Photos by**  
**Sean Cridland**



**PORSCHE**  
**356**  
**REGISTRY**

Volume 50, Number 2  
July / August 2026





# PORSCHE 356 REGISTRY



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## BRUMOS BEFORE THE 911

PART 1: 1900 TO 1950

By Sean Cridland

Within the contemporary Porsche community, the Brumos brand remains strong through its iconic white, red, and blue logo. Those with longer memories can recount its successes in the 1990s and early 2000s when they took IMSA Supercar championships and won iconic victories in the Rolex Grand-Am Daytona Prototype and GT series. For classicists, Peter Gregg, Hurley Haywood, and Jack Atkinson built the Brumos legend with almost total dominance in the 1970s. And for our seniors, Brundage-era lore includes starting the brand in the 1950s and pulling the name from its Telex communications with Stuttgart that abbreviated its name from Brundage Motors to Brumos.

For most Porsche enthusiasts, that's enough. But the deep history of the Brumos legend is far more intriguing and dramatic than most people know and involves some of the most interesting characters in American automotive history. For the Porsche 356 Registry, this three-part series will cast light on pre-911-era Brumos history, starting in upstate New York in the early 20th Century.

Brumos founder Hubert Brundage was born to Ira and Sue Brundage on August 11, 1911, in Hammondsport, New York, just over the hill from Watkins Glen. The Brundage family ran a small but very successful general store. Though Hubert couldn't



Copyright 2012 by the Brundage Co.  
5126 Hammondsport, N. Y., and Keuka Lake, N. Y.

**Above:** A young Hubert Brundage, eventual founder of Brumos, poses with a Bugatti near Ormond Beach in the mid-1920s.

The Brundage family got their start in business in Hammondsport, New York, just over the hill from Watkins Glen.

On the cover: During a recent Potomac Owners Group rally through the Virginia countryside, Bob Garretson's former 1959 A pauses next to the historic house known as Mount Pleasant (circa 1790), today a working horse and cattle ranch in Delaplane. Photo by Tom Schdel.

On this page: Unsurprisingly pleasant California weather greeted the most recent North Meets South concours. More great John Hearn photos illustrate our event coverage by Jim Lauer beginning on page 26.



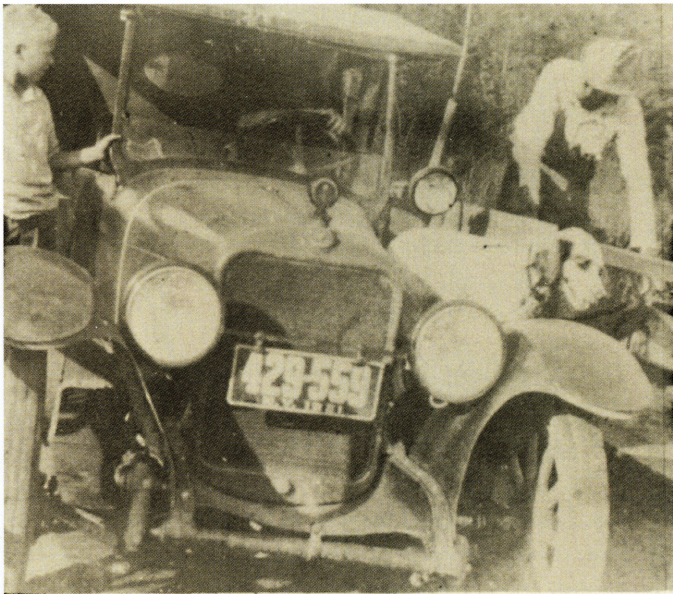
have known, the many planes buzzing over the hilly vineyards surrounding the village at the south end of Keuka Lake would contribute greatly to his future and the growth of the Porsche brand in the Americas, but that would take several decades to happen.

By 1911, Brundage family friend Glenn Hammond Curtiss was already famous for setting a world speed record of 136.36 mph at Ormond Beach, Florida, winning the Scientific American trophy for sustained flight, and landing sizable aviation contracts with the United States Armed Forces and several other nations eager to buy patented designs and/or engines and airplanes. Between Curtiss's world-famous aviation business and its many vineyards, Hammondsport had a flourishing economy.

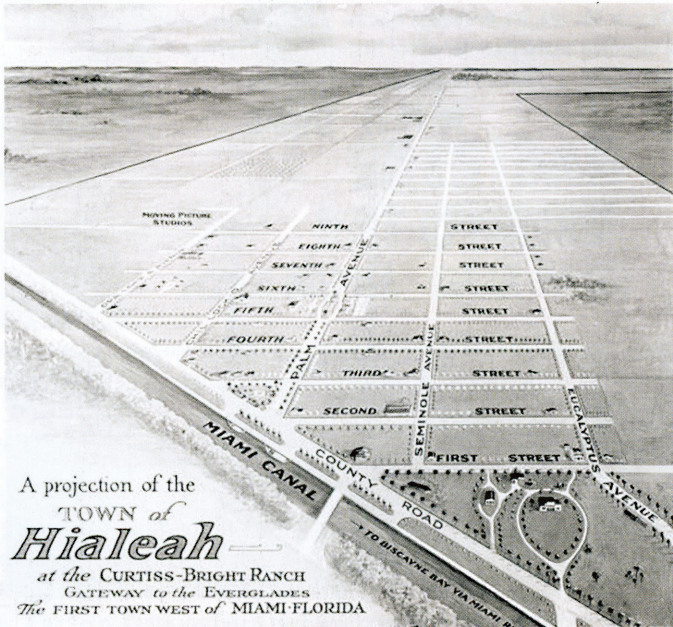
Everything changed in late 1918 when World War I ended and fewer aircraft were needed. Around the same time, the Volstead Act brought about Prohibition and killed the wine business. Curtiss sold his shares in the company he built and moved to his ranch near Miami, Florida. The company's new ownership moved its Hammondsport operations to Buffalo. With the town suffering massive job losses from its two major industries, the Brundage family store was also deeply affected. Fortunately, Ira Brundage's friendship with Curtiss provided a lifeline, if the family was willing to make a change.

In late 1921, Ira accepted an offer from Curtiss that included a business, housing, and several pieces of land in Florida. Ira would move south to help develop the cities of Hialeah, Miami Springs, and Opa-Locka. He started an automotive repair shop and, in 1924, purchased the Hialeah Lumber and Supply Company from Curtiss-Bright for \$50,000. By 1925, Brundage was on the city council and a founding member of the Hialeah-Miami Springs Bank. Hubert became one of history's youngest Eagle Scouts at the age of 12 in 1923. There was already an interest in motor-sports: family photos show a tween-aged Hubert Brundage sitting proudly in the Bugatti Type 35 at a local racing event and riding his own Harley-Davidson motorcycle at age 14.

As owners of Hialeah Lumber and Supply, the Brundages were likely suppliers to the Fulford-Miami board track, built in 1925 for the Carl G. Fisher Trophy 300. They enjoyed watching the speed record attempts held on Ormond Beach and became close friends with one of the most famous racers of the time, transplanted



An offer from Curtiss to help develop his land around Miami Springs inspired Ira Brundage to move his family to Florida in 1921 and help develop the communities of Miami Springs, Hialeah, and Opa-locka.



Norwegian Sig Haugdahl. The first person to exceed 180 mph, Haugdahl later paired with a young Bill France to run the very first stock car races on the combined beach-road course at Daytona in 1936 and 1937.

The late 1920s were not kind to the Miami/Hialeah area as the South Florida land boom petered out and the Great Miami Hurricane destroyed hundreds of homes, businesses, and municipal buildings all through south Florida. Then came the stock market crash of 1929, further hampering economic recovery. To make matters worse, Curtiss, the Brundage family benefactor, died in July of 1930. Somehow, the Brundage family started a string of small hardware stores in the Miami area while Hubert and his older brother went off to Central and South America to establish supply lines for the rapidly growing Pan American Airways. Working for Pan-Am was a well-paying job, especially through the Depression Era, and provided the

# ANNOUNCEMENT

## Curtiss-Bright Company

The Curtiss-Bright Company has sold the Hialeah Supply Company to Ira J. Brundage

This sale includes the land, buildings, lumber yards and stock of builders' supplies of the Hialeah Supply Company on Okeechobee Road in Hialeah. Mr. Brundage is now in full possession.

The Hialeah Supply Company is an essential utility in general construction in Hialeah and vicinity and is recommended for liberal patronage.

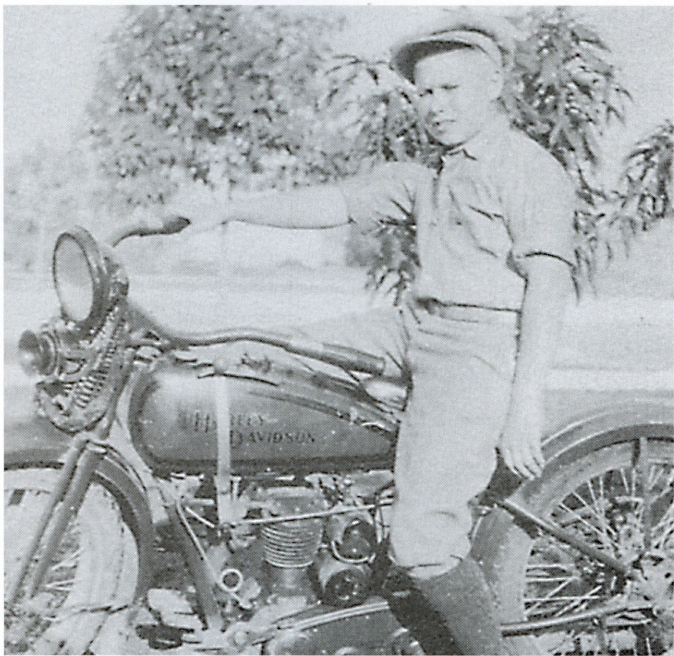
## Curtiss-Bright Company

Once in Florida, Ira Brundage opened an automotive repair shop, became a founding board member of the Hialeah-Miami Springs Bank, and purchased the Curtiss-Bright Lumber Company.



adventure of a lifetime for young men looking to make their fortune in a rapidly changing world. Hubert worked his way from the bottom all the way up to supply specialist for the Pan Am Clipper lines, first in the Caribbean, then on the West Coast, based in the San Francisco office. His time with Pan-Am gave him on-the-job training in transport logistics, import/export regulations, customer demographics, and the most up-to-date communications technologies of the day. All of this would be put to good use in his future endeavors in car importing.

As Prohibition was repealed and the Great Depression abated, the Miami area began growing by leaps and bounds. World War II brought many new Navy and Army service people into the area. After the war, many of them stayed. It wasn't long before the Miami area sprouted several Brundage stores. These operated as part of an association of independent retailers called *Sonny South*. In addition, Brundage had a side business repairing, refitting, and repainting war-surplus airplanes for resale. By the late 1940s,



Ira Brundage's interest in mechanical technology rubbed off on young Hubert, shown here perched upon an early Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

Hubert Brundage was well-known in the Florida business community as a tough, but fair negotiator, a young business leader with big ambitions.

Meanwhile, dad Ira Brundage got into a new hobby called "hot-rodding." For one of his projects he bought an old Duesenberg-Miller Indy car from New York State racing promoter Ira Vail. Though it raced the Indianapolis 500 every year from 1930 to 1935, it was most famous for Fred Frame's second place finish in 1931. The car also appeared in at least two movies: 1932's *The Crowd Roars*, and 1939's *The Indianapolis Speedway*.

In 1946, Ira reached out to a Chicago business called Grancor to buy one of its flathead Ford engines to put in the car and run it on the street. Grancor was the automotive tuning and hot-rod parts business run by the Granatelli brothers: Joe, Vince, and



A close family friend was Sig Haugdahl, who was famous for speed-record attempts, courting movie stars, and organizing stock car races with a kid named Bill France.

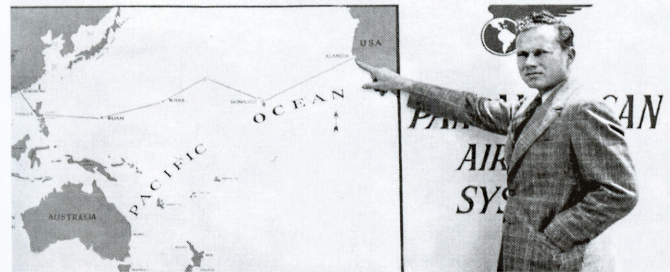
# CURTISS PLANT TO CLOSE DOWN

Hammondsport, Jan. 30.—The Curtiss airplane factory at Hammondsport is to close down for the time being, beginning February 1. The plant has been operating with a small force for several weeks.

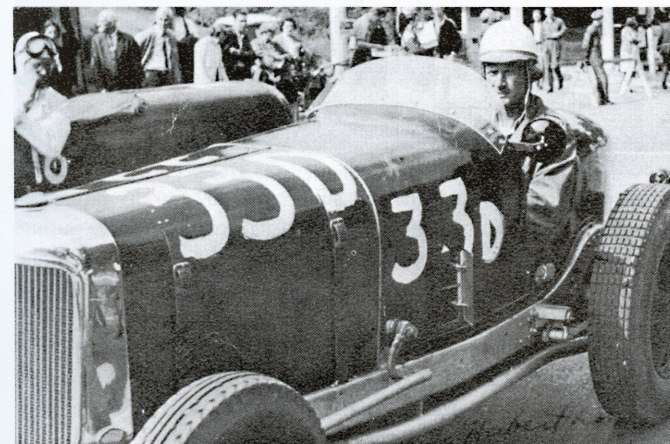
With the end of World War I, family friend Glenn Hammond Curtiss sold out of his aviation business, leaving a large part of Hammondsport's population unemployed. Coincidentally, Prohibition delivered a double whammy on the local economy.



# TRANSPACIFIC CROSSING NUMBER 229 HAWAII CLIPPER CAPTAIN TERLETSKY DEPARTURE ALAMEDA 3 PM



During the Depression years, a young Hubert Brundage worked for Pan-American Airlines. At first he helped to develop supply lines through Central America and the Caribbean. He eventually rose through the organization to work on logistics around the world.



Ira Brundage was an early hot rodder, which led him to buying an old Duesenberg that had raced several times in the Indianapolis 500. In 1931 it placed second at Indy with Fred Frame driving. It also featured in a couple of Hollywood movies.

Anthony (a.k.a., Andy, later known as “Mr. 500”). A favorite of many hot rodders, the flathead V-8 was known for its distinctive in-block valves and in-head combustion chamber, with a forged-steel crank and camshaft located within the block, just above the crank. Because the design was so elemental, it proved to be a versatile power source for racers of all kinds, from oval to drag racing and road racing.

In May 1947, Ira accepted an offer from Andy to visit the Grancor garage at Indianapolis for the lead-up to that year’s 500. Coincidentally, the board of the newly formed SCCA was in town to apply for the American Auto Club’s approval of an application to the Fédération Internationale de l’Automobile (FIA) to sanction its planned 1948 road race at Watkins Glen. During that same trip, Brundage met Austrian-born SCCA member Otto Linton, who was there with the Pauley-Vogt team. Pauley-Vogt were trying (unsuccessfully) to

Brundage wanted to replace the Miller engine in the car with a flathead Ford. This started a relationship with Grancor, headed by Anthony Granatelli, later to be known as Andy “Mister 500” Granatelli, sponsor of many STP-funded Indycar entries.



get Red Byron into the race using a Duesenberg like Brundage’s, equipped with a flathead Ford engine. Linton would become a lifelong friend, and the combination of these events led to Ira Brundage joining SCCA soon afterward. A year later, he and the Grancor-Ford-Duesenberg were entered for SCCA’s inaugural Watkins Glen Grand Prix weekend.

The first Watkins Glen race weekend was the stuff of legend. A who’s who of sports-car notables drove an eclectic mix of European car brands, joined by several American V-8-powered “specials.” Briggs Cunningham ran his BuMerc special. Sam and Miles Collier were racing sporty MGs. *New Yorker* cartoonist Charles Addams was piloting a Mercedes-Benz S, John Fitch had an MG,



Ira Brundage’s Granatelli connection led him to meeting the founders of the fledgling Sports Car Club of America and his participation in the first Watkins Glen Grand Prix, held in 1948.



Otto Linton drove an MG-J4. Stutz, Maserati, Jaguar, Lagonda, Vauxhall, BMW, Delahaye, Triumph, Bugatti, Talbot Lago, and Bentley were just some of the marques taking places on the grid.

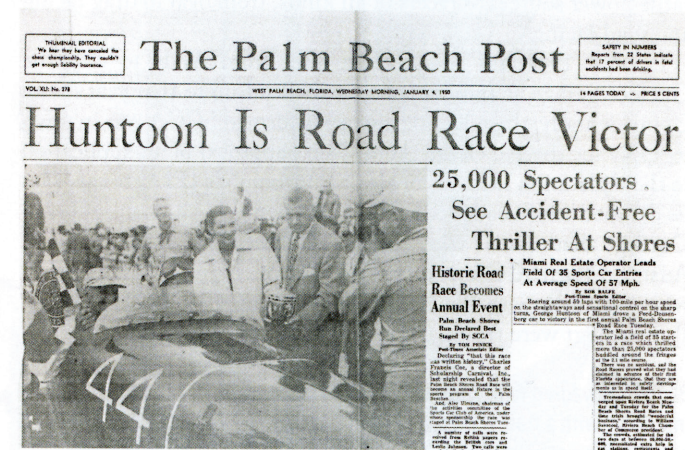


After running an 18-year-old car with a 62-year-old driver at Watkins Glen, Brundage took his Duesenberg back to Miami Springs and completely re-engineered the car for the 1950 Palm Beach Grand Prix.

Ira finished 16th in the Junior Race after the Grancor engine suffered from a bad vibration.

Once back to Florida, Ira and fabricator Karl Sundman reengineered the car from top to bottom for its next competitive outing. Learning from the Grancor engine, they built their own version of a flathead Ford, cherry-picking all the best parts available at the time. A similar process carried through to their suspension engineering, tire, and gear selection. For a driver, Brundage stepped aside in favor of nationally recognized hot shoe George Huntoon, who had a winning reputation in sports-car racing stretching back to the pre-war ARCA days. Now they had the car and driver to win.

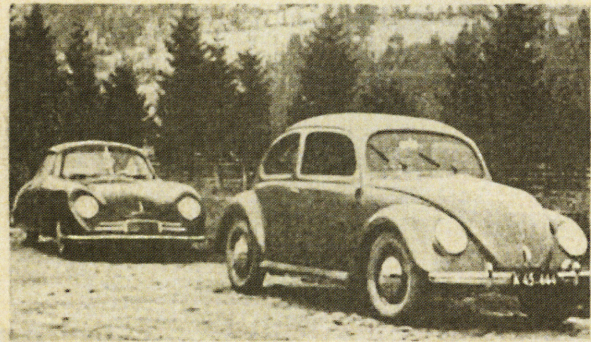
The Palm Beach Shores race of early January 1950 featured a laundry list of American racing royalty: Cunningham in a Cadillac-Healey, Tom Cole in an Allard-Cadillac, Zora Arkus-Duntov in an Ardun/Ford-Allard, Miles Collier in a Riley-Ford. There were also several European sports cars, including a Ferrari 166 Inter, a dozen MG TCs, and four Jaguar XK 120s. When the green flag waved for the race around the 2.1-mile course, Huntoon swept past Cole on lap two and led for the rest of the race, winning



With road-racing ace George Huntoon at the wheel, the Brundage Duesenberg dominated a field that included many of the SCCA’s best, including Briggs Cunningham and the Collier brothers.



## TRANSATLANTIC



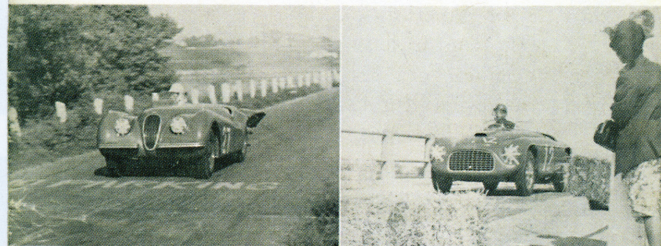
THE CARS in this pleasant Alpine setting are both engineered by Dr. Ferdinand Porsche: rt., German Volkswagen; left, Austrian Porsche

ITALY: Alfa-Romeo is as unchanging in its basic conceptions as tradition-loving Rolls-Royce, although its experimental de-

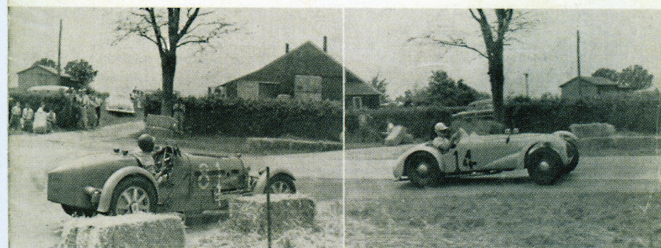
During that same time period, a couple new German cars were making their first forays onto American soil: the Volkswagen economy car and the Porsche luxury sports car, here in the February 1950 issue of *Motor Trend*.

## ROAD and TRACK

JULY  
AUGUST 1950 35



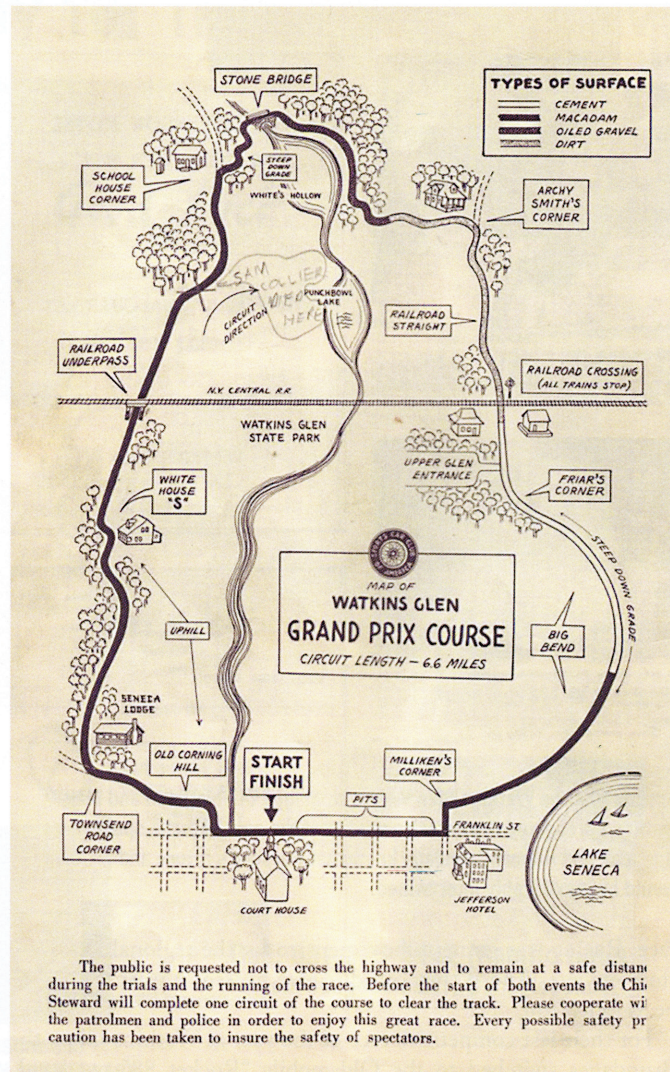
### BRIDGEHAMPTON ROAD RACE



ROAD RACE DETAILS  
ON PAGE 4

*The Motor Enthusiast's Magazine*

Though the Brundage car was in the leading pack at that summer's race at Bridgehampton, it was becoming clear that racing at the front was going to take more dollars than a middle-class family could handle.

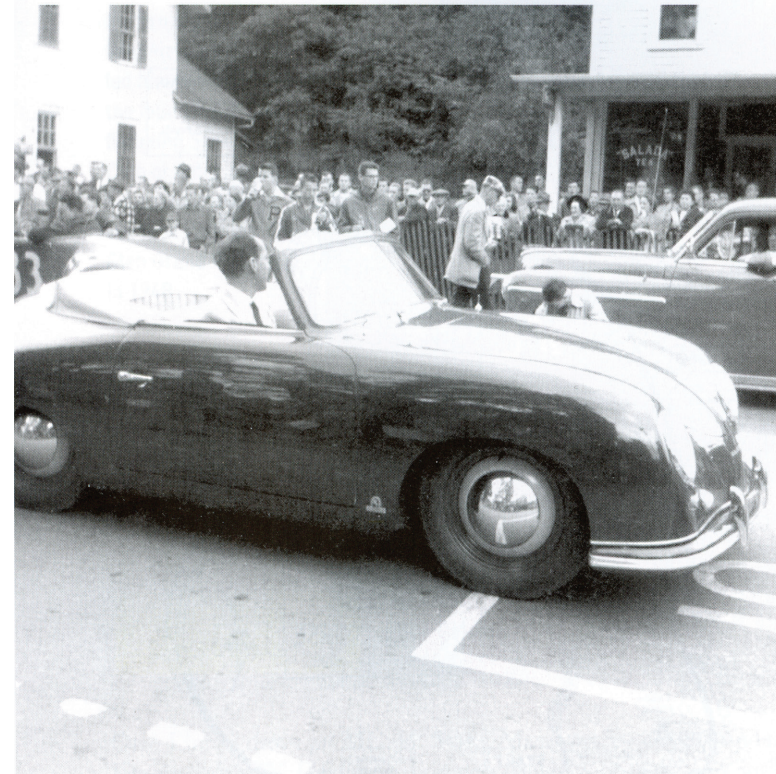


For the 1950 Watkins Glen Grand Prix, the Brundage car switched to an Oldsmobile Rocket 88 engine, but the change was too late. The car dropped out of its last race with electrical issues. It was the end of one era, but the beginning of something far more interesting.

ahead of Briggs Cunningham in second, and George Rand's Ferrari in third. The Brundage's twenty-year-old Duesenberg had beaten the SCCA's best.

But behind the scenes, the SCCA politicians and media pundits began discussions about what entailed a "proper sports car." *Speed Age*, *Road & Track*, and *Motor Trend* ran features debating the validity of American-powered "specials" versus sports cars from marques like Ferrari, Jaguar, Alfa-Romeo, and MG, and what everyone perceived the sports-car life to really be about. Of interest to the developing Brundage story, the February 1950 issue of *Motor Trend* published two photos of what they called "Austria's version of ultra-modern styling... manufactured by Ferdinand Porsche, famed designer of the Volkswagen and Auto Union."

The next two events, at Bridgehampton and Watkins Glen, sealed the Brundage fate in more ways than one. At the June race through the dunes at the end of Long Island, the Brundage car was updated with better brakes and more efficient cooling, but the competition was even more fierce. The best Huntton could do was a pair of third places in the preliminary and the final. If the Brundage family was racing for fun, the Cunninghams, Colliers, and their ilk were taking it seriously, bringing new cars to every



Throughout the Watkins Glen weekend, Briggs Cunningham and Max Hoffman presented the American debut of the new Porsche sports cars. One look and Hubert Brundage knew that Porsche's future and his own would be inextricably intertwined.

race. Racing was going to be expensive for the regional hardware store owners. And if they couldn't race to win, it wasn't going to be as much fun.

For their last competitive race of the year at Watkins Glen, the Brundages switched to the Oldsmobile "Rocket 88" overhead-valve V-8, which had already proven itself by winning the 1949 NASCAR championship for Red Byron and powering Herschel McGriff to victory in the first Carrera Panamericana Mexican road race. Besides running cooler, the Olds had 20 more cubic inches of displacement than the Ford and could produce as much as 30 percent more power.

The weekend was a hard one for the Brundages and the entire racing community. Sam Collier lost his life in a racing accident near the School House bend. Electrical issues took Huntton out early in the Seneca Cup race. Hubert Brundage raced the Grand Prix with his supercharged MG but dropped out on lap 12 of 15.

Still, there was a positive.

Briggs Cunningham and Max Hoffmann were highly visible that weekend, driving around the streets of Watkins Glen and through the hilltop vineyards surrounding Seneca Lake in the first two Porsche 356s in North America. Small, yet elegant with a steel body that was both aerodynamically efficient and pleasing to the eye, and a simple yet beautifully appointed interior of the highest standards, everyone put the blue coupe and red cabriolet on their wish list.

For Hubert Brundage, the world of sports-car racing was fun and glamorous and offered glimpses of the high celebrity life. But racing wasn't doable if he couldn't profit from it. On seeing these two cars, the clouds parted and rays of sunshine illuminated a perfect vision. Hardware stores paid the bills—for now—but for Brundage the future was spelled P-O-R-S-C-H-E. 356

